



PATERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 50

P.O. Box 189 – Paterson, WA 99345 – Phone (509)875-2601 – Fax (509) 875-2067

September 3, 2013

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries, WC Docket 13-184

Dear Ms. Dortch,

The Paterson School District is a one school, PreK-8 District that serves approximately 124 students. The community that we serve is in a small, rural unincorporated area which is located on the banks of the Columbia River in south-central Washington. The economy of the area is determined by the health of the local agricultural industry – unstable at best. Many of our families must travel 35-40 miles to reach the nearest cities with access to adequate library systems, medical facilities, and other resources that most communities take for granted.

The focus of our PreK-8 programs has been to ensure the development of the critical reading, writing, and thinking skills necessary for success in academically rigorous courses that lead to success in high school which then leads on to success in college. We continue to focus our efforts on implementing solid ESL intervention strategies in reading, writing, and math. We support the research that claims that when schools focus on improvement in these three areas of teaching and learning, all students' scores go up significantly. With the poverty level in our district at close to 75% and with over 50% of our students coming from homes where English is not their first language, it has become our District's mission to not only provide our students with quality instruction in all of the basic programs; but also as much continued enrichment and enhancement activities as possible -- and having access to a quality universal broadband system is essential!

This letter offers comments related to the FCC's effort to modernize the E-rate program.

We believe:

- Universal access to broadband is necessary to meet school reform and improvement goals. These goals include the development of K-12 programming able to prepare all students for college and 21st century careers.
- The demand for access to broadband is growing rapidly beyond the ability of schools to provide it, despite the cost advantage possible through the E-rate discount.
- A modernized E-rate program must be less burdensome for schools, and aligned more effectively to current and future K-12 education priorities. There is also a growing need to help schools plan and budget for technology.

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- Today's demand for the cost benefit of the E-rate program exceeds available funding. Clearly, the amount of money available for schools must increase to meet state and local needs.

We agree that it is time to modernize the E-rate program and support positive change that benefits K-12 schools. We encourage you to move quickly as you complete your deliberations.

If you have any further questions about our district, please do not hesitate to contact me at 509-875-2601.

Sincerely,

Peggy S. Douglas
Superintendent